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THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 1890.

Electricity in the Household.

Under this title A. E. Kennelly contributes to Scribner an interesting paper.

The first use of electricity to household appliances was the electric bell, nearly a century ago. It has now become so common that a bell hung by the former mechanical appliances is antiquated and clumsy. Then came the electric annunciator.

For many years this was the extent of the application of electricity to household purposes. Within the last thirteen years there has come, all in a rush, the telephone, electric light and the transmission of power by electricity. Electric illumination has received a temporary setback through the number of men who have been killed by the conducting wires, but beyond doubt this will be overcome and a safe and perfect electrical light will yet be obtained—one that will be used in private houses as freely as gas now is.

Mr. Kennelly mentions the burglar alarm apparatus, by which, if a thief raises a window so much as the thickness of a knife blade, a current is completed that rings the bell on him all over the house. There, too, is the thermostat, a little thermometer, which, by the aid of electricity, regulates automatically the temperature of a room. The fire alarm is another modern application of this force, and Mr. Kennelly says that since the common use of the electrical alarm, statistics show a marked decrease in the number of serious fires in towns.

Electricity will keep all the clocks in your house wound up and set to the same moment. It will pump water from well or cistern to a tank in your garret. It will run your sewing machine or music box, blow the bellows of an organ and will make an automatic piano play fashionable waltzes for a gathering of young people to dance by from dark to daylight, and never once become tired or make the company feel that they are making a martyr of it for their pleasure. In course of time houses can and will be heated by electricity. It will be utilized for a hundred other purposes as soon as a cheap and reliable generator of it is found.

Some More Homesteads.

In the eastern border of South Dakota is the reservation of the Sisseton Indians. They and the Wahpeton Indians are negotiating with the government for the sale of their lands. When the sale is consummated, as it will be ere long, 750,000 acres of land will be added to the homestead domain. The Fort Sisseton military reservation, near the Indian lands, is also to be abandoned for military purposes. It contains 400,000 acres.

Thus nearly a million and a quarter of acres of new farms will be open to settlers ere long, though not all of it is tillable. The Indians have reserved such lands as they desired for farms for themselves in severality.

Only one point of difference still remains to be adjusted between the government and the Sissetons. The Indians have an old claim against the United States which, they say, should be settled before they abandon their land to settlement. Years ago, before they had their teeth set, when they knew not the true value of a Dakota wheat farm, they say they were persuaded by white men to sell their lands for five cents an acre. This a fact. The red men who were thus deluded ask the government to now make an appropriation indemnifying them for this swindle when they were green. Their request certainly does not look unreasonable.

Count Chardonnay, a French chemist, received from the exposition the grand medal for the invention of an artificial silk, perfectly adapted to its purposes. Silk worms were dying in Europe at a rate that was alarming. The count studied carefully the chemical constitution of silk and prepared a solution identical with it. He poured a solution of collodion through hairlike glass tubes. The collodion hardened into threads, after being passed through another set of tubes containing water. After being still further treated, threads were produced which could be woven into the finest silk.

In southern Nevada, in Georgia and in California is found a peculiar substance known as elastic sandstone. It is undoubtedly a stone, yet it is as flexible as India rubber. A piece of it may be held by one end and shaken, and the loose end will flop backward and forward like a mule's ear. It can be drawn out and compressed like a piece of Indian rubber, that too on one plane, but in any direction. "The entire stone seems to be constructed on the principle of a universal joint," says a writer who describes it. The stone is called itacolomite.

An electric railway 250 miles long, from Atlanta to Savannah, has been planned. The electricity will be generated in a novel way, by utilizing power from the current of rivers along the route. The enterprise is one of much importance. If water power from a river current can be successfully used to generate large quantities of electricity there is no end to the mechanical possibilities that will follow.

A Philadelphia man shot himself dead in the street in that city a few days ago. Such a suicide is in the worst possible taste. If a man makes up his mind to die, let him go off by himself and do it, and not shock his fellow men by blowing his brains out and making a horrible show on the street.

The Reading railroad has established a direct freight line from Philadelphia to London. The growth of its freight business from the west has been such that the traffic will now sustain a freight line across the ocean. There were already on American steamship line from Philadelphia to Europe, and another is expected to be established before the close of 1890.

Edison was asked to lecture to the members. He replied that he could not go, but that he would give the lecture. "I will tell you what I will do," he said. "I will talk to my photograph, and send it to Kansas City to lecture for me. It will make no gestures, but it will not be bashful; the tone will be perfect, and I will warrant that it can be heard all over the opera house."

A person with an abnormal development of regard for high art is scolding the public because it goes to the theatre to be amused. What else should anybody go to the theatre for? There is enough of tragedy, enough and too much in our daily life of everything else than amusement. In its true sense amusement combines mirth, pathos, elevation of sentiment and the depicting of the loftier, sweeter emotions, as well as the lower ones. The true idea of amusement is that which lifts us out of the iron commonplace of daily life.

Liberty Island, as it is now called, Bidloe's Island as it was formerly, which proudly bears the Bartholdi Statue of Liberty upon its bosom, has become the property of New Jersey, and all. The boundary between New York and New Jersey has been in dispute more than a hundred years. In 1897 a joint commission was appointed by the two state legislatures to settle differences. The commission decided that the boundary line should be the middle of the channel in Hudson river and New York bay. Thus very valuable dock privileges, the Robbins Reef lighthouse, and Bidloe's Island with the Statue of Liberty and all the mosquitoes pass into the possession of Jersey. The electric light with which Liberty illumines the Statue costs \$20 a night. The United States pays that, however.

The Pope and Progress.

W. T. Stead, of The London Pall Mall Gazette, writes a striking letter from Rome on the position of Pope Leo XIII with regard to modern reforms. According to Stead, his holiness is fully aware of the radical reforms in the labor field. He is vigorously pushing the organization of Catholic trades unions, having aims identical with those sought by the general trades unions. The holy father would shorten the hours of labor, so as to give the workman time to educate himself, and he would fix by law and custom the seventh day for rest. On the continent of Europe Sunday labor is much more common than it is in Great Britain or America.

Those in the pope's councils told Mr. Stead that he would gladly co-operate with Protestants of all sects, and even with representatives of atheistical and revolutionary societies in enforcing the workingman's release from labor on Sunday. In brief, the program of the various socialistic congresses that met in Paris this summer formed for the amelioration of the masses will be observed by the pope with striking accuracy by the program the pope has laid down, Stead tells us. We are told further that the holy father is in favor of the emancipation of woman, seeing in this the salvation of the church.

Most striking of all, however, is the evidence here given once more of the complete adaptability of the Roman Catholic church to the changing conditions of modern society and the ability of her leaders to see which way the wind blows.

Local Historical Societies.

Hezekiah Butterworth makes in The Youth's Companion a valuable suggestion to people in the smaller towns and in country neighborhoods. It is that they form local societies to study the pioneer and other history of their own localities. Our civilization changes so rapidly that already traces of the brave pioneer times are dying out from our memories and from the face of the country. By all means this valuable portion of our story should be preserved. Wherever aged persons survive, their recollections should be carefully noted down and preserved in the archives of the society.

The association should have a room or rooms, with stated meetings and officers. At the meetings there should be papers read, stories told and discussions of disputed points. Certainly the least every neighborhood can do is to preserve its own early history. A cabinet of historic relics and books should be gradually accumulated. There could be delightful summer excursions to historic points by the society.

There is one thing we in America owe to the story of human progress. That is to preserve the prehistoric relics now going to destruction all over the country. What Amelia B. Edwards did in England for Egypt, we need some one to do for us on a far larger scale in America. This is to create a fund for exploring our ancient civilizations. Where there are mound builders' hillocks and prehistoric remains of any kind, an organization should be formed to take care of them and study them.

Below are Mr. Butterworth's suggestions for local historical societies:

1. A collection for a cabinet of the historic relics of the place.
2. Talks and lectures on the place.
3. A lecture on local history.
4. The celebration of state and national holidays in the room or rooms.
5. Excursions to historic places.
6. The collection of local folk lore.
7. The marking and preserving of places of local interest.
8. Collection of local poetry and songs.
9. Removals of old people.
10. Tabulars of old scenes and traditions.

Motor Power of the Future.

Charles Morris contributes to Lippincott's some interesting speculations on what we shall do for a motor power when the coal fields give out, and there will be no more fuel to make steam.

There will be no serious trouble, in the judgment of Mr. Morris. As long as the sun shines there will be power, since all there is at present came originally from the sun. It is the source of all energy. For twenty-five years before his death John Ericsson was engaged in perfecting a sun motor, one that by the mere action of the sun's rays upon it would lift weights and turn wheels. He executed a solemn promise from his chief engineer that he would not cease work on this solar engine. Ericsson used large reflecting mirrors to collect and intensify the sun rays.

Then there is the mighty power of the tides. If engineers knew how to utilize this resistless force, there would be developed power enough to drive all the machinery a far larger world than ours

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